



# Survival in a Hostile Global Environment: Zimbabwe's Alternative Gold Trade as a Soft Power Interventionist Tact

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## ABSTRACT

This paper examined the trajectory of Zimbabwe's gold trade as a soft power strategy towards survival in the brutal global economic environment and explored the concomitant implications this has had on the country's relations with the global North. Moreover, the paper demystified the Gold Mafia documentary as a means to taint Zimbabwe's economic survival efforts. Of particular importance is how the neo-imperialist forces co-opted, criminalised and demonised Zimbabwe's efforts to engage in gold trade with friendly states including China, United Arab Emirates and South Africa among others. In the Aljazeera documentary dubbed Gold Mafia, an attempt was made through plain media propaganda to make Zimbabwe's governmental institutions accomplices in illicit gold trade and leakages. The idea was to make Zimbabwe appear as a country that lacks transparency and accountability in addition to non-conformity to the so-called international standards which are a mere popularisation of the Western established monopoly. Against this backdrop, it can be argued that the documentary was a means to a political end; the end being to demonise Zimbabwe's soft power interventionist tact. Furthermore, the objective of the propaganda was to further isolate Zimbabwe as well as to chase away potential investors. With this said, this paper constitutes an epistemic contribution to knowledge on Zimbabwe's soft power survival strategies, neo-imperialist counterstrategies and the way forward towards sustaining survival in the hostile global environment.

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## INTRODUCTION

Having been isolated and sanctioned at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century by the West owing to efforts towards correcting colonial imbalances through the land reform exercise that began in 2000, Zimbabwe opted for a Look East trade policy that involved trading with friendly states. Zimbabwe's survival strategy to rely on soft power including through gold trade with friendly states appears to have irritated the capitalist world to the extent of sponsoring a smear campaign documentary on Zimbabwe's gold trade dubbed the Gold Mafia. The objective of this paper is to examine the contemporary dynamics of Zimbabwe's gold trade which has assumed the form of a soft power strategy as the means to survive in the brutal global economic environment. Furthermore, it explores the concomitant implications this has had on the country's relations with the global capitalist states. Against this background, this paper demystifies the Gold Mafia documentary as a desperate and deliberate effort by the irate capitalist states to smear Zimbabwe's economic survival efforts. The paper traces the history of trade in minerals in the era of the Munhumutapa Kingdom, Ashanti Kingdom (West Africa) and many other African kingdoms when Portuguese, British and Arab traders among others came to Africa for gold and other minerals. This was facilitated by trade agents who were never labelled smugglers. Africa's predicament in relation to the dynamics of the colonial world order: Africa's quagmire indicates that the African continent was

incorporated into a complex web of the global capitalist system. This saw the building of networks for the facilitation of the exploitation of resources by the custodians of capitalism. The author's concluding viewpoint is that the Al Jazeera documentary is an immoral strategy to downplay the new economic order that Harare adopted to counter the justified trade embargoes labelled as sanctions.

### **Historical Dimensions of Gold and Gold Trade in Zimbabwe**

Exploring the history of gold trade and middlemanship therein suffices to illuminate the complexity of the contemporary trajectory of these issues. There has been a hypocrisy of the capitalist center whose intentions and interests with respect to African resources including gold have since the colonial era always been to exploit undisturbed. It, therefore, becomes prudent to expose that the trajectory of what the Al Jazeera documentary has attempted to demonise and criminalise in relation to Zimbabwe's gold trade is non-existent.<sup>1</sup> In the Gold Mafia Documentary whose information was gathered in violation of research and journalistic ethics, an attempt to demonise Zimbabwe's international gold trade has dismally failed because trade in minerals predates history itself.

It is worth noting that trade in minerals in the era of the Munhumutapa Kingdom, Ashanti Kingdom (West Africa) and many other African kingdoms when Portuguese, Arab, Chinese, German and British traders came to Africa for gold and other minerals was facilitated by trade agents who were never labelled smugglers. And to trace the history of gold mining in Zimbabwe, no new mining sites were discovered by the Rhodesian settlers, they usurped the mining sites of the local indigenous people. That explains why Mazowe was the first flashpoint in the 1890s, it was gold. Even the contours of conflict in 1896 in Matabeleland are traceable to gold mining.

Even the mining and siphoning of gold and resources from Africa was and still is never classified as an illicit flow of resources. Now that Zimbabwe, a sovereign country that refuses economic bullying by the West, is participating in global trade in its own legitimate ways and has accumulated non-Western trade partners, some imperialist capitals built on stolen resources from Africa have the temerity to predictably find ways to demonise Zimbabwe's gold trade.

The bulk of such dimensions is hidden and controlled through media. This is because every world order invents its own moral universe which legitimizes and illegitimizes the order. And it is the media that creates such a moral universe to rally public opinion by persuasion. After media, intellectuals become instruments of persuasion as they diffuse and disseminate the values of the moral order. Since the British media monopoly has been replaced by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) media outlets as the new global chapel, the British went for Al Jazeera to disseminate their gold mafia vile, not the BBC or CNN in order to hoodwink the opinion of the clientele. In other words, they pick a media outlet aligned to the Third World countries to make their message unassailable.

The documentary can actually strengthen the position of the President. Controversial as it appears and sounds from the documentary, psychologists have proven the human mind is actually attracted to what appears unconventional, unlawful and unthinkable. Psychologists have proven that unconventional information is interesting to talk about.

Suffice to also mention that gold leakages are not peculiar to Zimbabwe alone. The phenomenon occurs worldwide. On 17 April 2023, in what has been dubbed the 'Canada Gold Heist' millions worth of gold worth millions of dollars was reported stolen from Canada's Toronto International Airport with topnotch security surveillance systems.<sup>2</sup> Judging from the Canadian experience, there is no need for rocket science to illustrate the universality of gold leakages throughout the world.

The trajectory of exploitative global economic governance and the subsequent unfair trade relations and practices can be pinpointed as one key driver of gold leakages in not only Zimbabwe but the world over. Due to the UAE's level of openness with respect to economic relations with Africa, it is not surprising that Zimbabwe's bullion is favorably sold in Dubai. More so, the notion of middlemen is not new to the gold trade as the coloureds would go to hinterlands to meet chiefs in the facilitation of gold deals, the colonial state simply modernized the continuum of middlemanship in gold trade. What has only changed in Zimbabwe is the end, not the means.

With the above said, the whole gold leakages and illicit gold trade dynamics should rather be interpreted in terms of the shifting balance in economic relations and trade in the world. Against this backdrop, there is no

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<sup>1</sup> Aljazeera, *Gold Mafia - Episode 3 - El-Dorado*, 2023, <https://network.aljazeera.net/en/press-releases/gold-mafia-episode-3—el-dorado>.

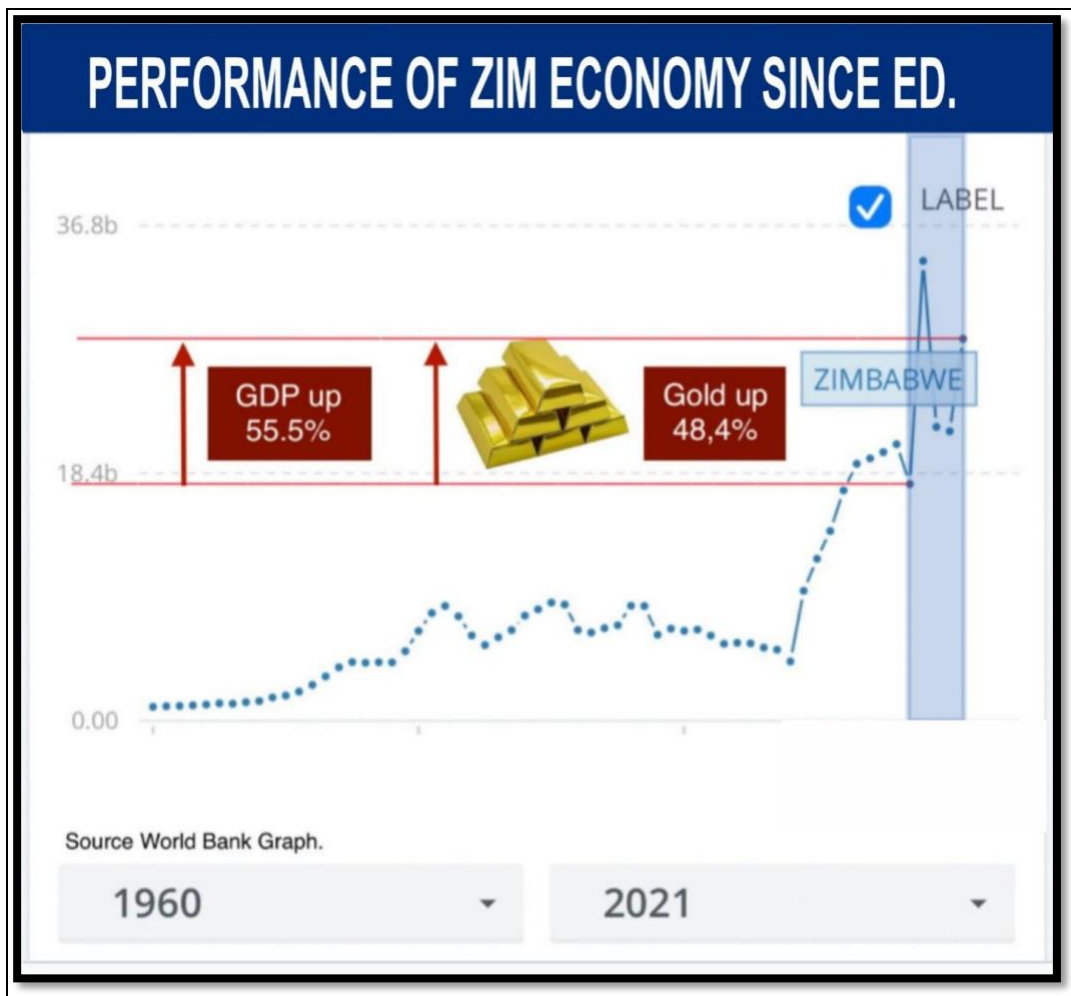
<sup>2</sup> Leyland Cecco, "Canada Gold Heist: Police Investigating \$20 Million of High Value Cargo Stolen from Toronto Airport April 21, 2023.," *The Guardian*, 2023.

doubt that the gold stolen in Canada will find its way to the UAE where the gold trade resembles fairness and non-discriminatory practices.

Questions should rather be posed pertaining to the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) trade regimes which have continued to tilt in favor of the North. Key among these questions relates to the discrimination in the valuation of resources including gold from the South, the politicization of trade by the North and reluctance to reform and harmonise international trade rules and policies since the 1950s.

With the perpetuation of these international trade discrepancies, gold trade for Africa has remained more of chasing a mirage. The so-called gold leakages and illicit gold trafficking and trade have therefore directly emanated from mentioned global trade malpractices instigated and perpetuated by the North. Hence, what the Al Jazeera documentary actually exposed are the implications of unfair practice of natural resources trade in the world using Zimbabwe as their case study.

Gold leakages have also been prevalent in Africa since their instigation by the arrival of early missionary and colonial settlers on the continent. According to McQuade, the traumatic exploitation of natural resources traces its origins to early colonialism.<sup>3</sup> Hence, early colonial relationships continue to define and shape the movement of gold across borders.



Source: Zimbabwe Anti-Sanctions Movement.org (2023)

Contrary to Al Jazeera's unfounded allegations and hearsay, the graph above illustrates that the New Dispensation has actually accelerated the country's economic outlook in respect of gold trade. With gold production and deliveries increasing sharply by 48% culminating in a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 50%, this trend has irked Zimbabwe's international adversaries who anticipated the collapse of the country's economy.

President Mnangagwa has therefore made history by presiding over Zimbabwe's epic permeation of the global gold trade. This is against the background that neo-imperialist forces and their equivalents never imagined Zimbabwe's economic rise against the odds of sanctions and trade embargoes. Hence, Zimbabwe has made

<sup>3</sup> Joseph McQuade, "Earth Day: Colonialism's Role in the Overexploitation of Natural Resources," *The Conversation* 18 (2019).

frantic efforts to extricate herself from the colonial world order. Perhaps it suffices to explore the dynamics of the colonial world order in order to understand why imperialist forces are having nightmares regarding Zimbabwe's survival through alternative trade routes and alignment with friendly nations.

### **Dynamics of the Colonial World Order: Africa's Quagmire**

Through imperialism and colonialism, the African continent was incorporated into a complex web of the global capitalist system. This saw the building of networks for the facilitation of the exploitation of resources by the custodians of capitalism. The networks culminated in the establishment of the five structural institutions into which African states were forced with their manufactured consent. The five institutions are the global political system, global legal system, global economic system, and Euro-North American moral and cultural systems. These systems have been used in several ways as the pillars of the capitalist system. Above all, these pillars have formed themselves into yardsticks of what is permissible or impermissible in global trade. The configurations of power in these institutions were designed over time in several ways to overcome the resistance from the dominant groups. Hence, African states either collectively or individually have always been moving in circles in attempts to extricate themselves from the colonial contact and moral universe it created and continues to create.

The configuration of political power in the global political system has been calculated to make African states rely upon and be subordinated to institutions, ideologies, values and neo-colonial political cultures. With the recognition of the state system and subsequent political organisation at the 1648 Westphalia Treaty and the political norms imposed in the post-1945 era, Western political ideologies became dominant and all states were made to adopt through enforced consent. What emerged in the post-1945 era was the global political community to replace the political idea of nationalism.<sup>4</sup> The system became to be known as the liberal international order which Stokes criticised for existing to coercively maintain the hegemonic influence of the United States of America (USA).<sup>5</sup>

Even though the global political community was predicated upon security interests and perceptions of threats to international peace and security, Kagan shares the same view with Stokes that the liberal political order is a cover for American hegemony and imperialism.<sup>6</sup> This is attributable to the widening unjust, imbalances and inequalities characterising the global political and administration structures.<sup>7</sup> The unevenness of global political order is illustrated by the composition of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) whose five permanent, France, USA, Britain, Russia and China, do not include an African state.

Apart from the composition of the UNSC, the trajectory of the mere existence of international organisations underscores the existential threat and sustenance of the colonial system through delegated authority. According to Gabriela, the international organisations system tilts in favour of rich and powerful states. Hence, the post-World War 2 idea of having international organisations checkmate states is a neo-colonialist machination meant to clandestinely sustain the colonial system.<sup>8</sup> Even though the argument behind the existence of international organisations is the achievement of international goals collectively that include helping societies in need and ensuring the realisation of development, democracy and security. The utopian conception of justice measured in terms of the distribution of rights, duties, resources and opportunities has appeared to be a phantom on the horizon.<sup>9</sup> This is so because international organisations have been utilised as tools of oppression, exploitation and hegemonic influence. For instance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) military involvement in Libya in 2011 to implement the UNSC 1973 adopted to end the Libyan government's attack against civilians can be cited as one example of the pursuit of imperialist objectives by international organisations. The Libya invasion is largely criticised as an act of aggression,<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Sudhir Chella Rajan, "Global Politics and Institutions," *GTI Paper Series: Frontiers of a Great Transition*, 2006, 12.

<sup>5</sup> Doug Stokes, "Trump, American Hegemony and the Future of the Liberal International Order," *International Affairs* 94, no. 1 (2018): 138.

<sup>6</sup> Hans Abrahamson, "Understanding the World Order, Continuity and Change – Security, Development and Justice in the Global Era," [https://www.globalstudies.gu.se/DigitalAsserts/271/1274383\\_abrahamson\\_kina.Pdf](https://www.globalstudies.gu.se/DigitalAsserts/271/1274383_abrahamson_kina.Pdf) (Beijing, April 7, 2008); .

<sup>7</sup> Erik O. Erikson, "Three Conceptions of Global Political Justice," 2017, 1.

<https://www.sv.uio.no/arena/english/research/publications/arena-working-papers/2017/wp-1-17.pdf>; Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poor Countries and What Can Be Done About It?* (New York: Oxford University, 2007); Jeffrey Sachs, *Common Wealth: Economics for a Crowded Planet* (Penguin, 2008); Joseph Stiglitz, "The Future of Global Governance," Working Paper Series, 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Sterian Maria Gabriela, "The Role of International Organizations in the Global Economic Governance-an Assessment," *Romanian Economic and Business Review*, 2013, 312.

<sup>9</sup> Iris Marion Young, "Justice and the Politics of Difference," in *Democracy: A Reader* (Columbia University Press, 2016), 553–57; Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (John Wiley & Sons, 1974).

<sup>10</sup> Niels Rijike, *Intervention in Libya: A Crime of Aggression* (International Crimes Database, Brief , 2014), 6.

unlawful and disguised for the pursuit of Western economic interests.<sup>11</sup> Having said the above, it suffices to argue that international organisations serve as agents of the neo-colonialist agenda which is resource-based and resource-driven.

Furthermore, the dynamics of the global economic system depict clear signs of the neo-colonialist agenda. The existing political economic order relegates Africa to the periphery and the continent plays the role of a secondary partner and beneficiary in the world economic system. Between the mid-1400 and mid-1800, the rest of the world was incorporated into a world economic system dominated by European capitalism organised by colonial empires of the Atlantic powers.<sup>12</sup> Part of the antecedents of colonialism was the slave trade that enabled Europeans to expand their settlement in Africa and accumulate capital for the European world to finance its industrial revolution.<sup>13</sup> As the world economic system expanded and became globalised, the rules, institutions and organisation of the world market remained enmeshed in the more complicated capitalist system. The system transitioned from an old and crude to a subtle and sophisticated form of colonialism which Bulhan calls meta-colonialism which is a consolidation of capitalism, liberal democracy and Western culture into a unified and globalised force.<sup>14</sup>

With economic globalisation, the division of labour between developed and developing states became more ostensible as the latter were and are meant to specialise in the extraction of raw materials with the former feeding raw material into their industries.<sup>15</sup> This exploitative relationship is compounded by the role and influence of Multinational Companies (MNC) that became the custodians of imperialism in international trade issues.<sup>16</sup> The democratic deficiency of international trade whose rules and the whole system of global economic governance under the World Trade Organisation (WTO) are grossly unfair has also sustained the international distribution of political, economic and military capabilities that tilts in favour of developed countries to the detriment of their developing counterparts.<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, the international monetary system under the auspices of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) has made African states depend on it for capital which comes with conditionalities and those that have defied the conditions have always faced economic collapse which resonates with Zimbabwe economic quagmire. Consequently, African states have been left poor, powerless and at the mercy of the rich and powerful to the extent of being unable to consistently mount resistance to neo-colonialism. To accelerate survival efforts from these evil networks, Zimbabwe has taken alternative steps to Look East including aspects of trading her natural resources such as gold.

### **Failed Propaganda and Regrettable Smear Campaign**

The Gold Mafia Documentary by Al Jazeera appalled the Zimbabwean populace particularly and appealed to the global political divide to depict Zimbabwe as a nation that is being manhandled to the detriment of the perceived ideals of the revolution that culminated in the birth of the system that replaced the colonial administrative system and paved way for an administration that caters for the fulfilment of the vanquished and reversing the social, political and economic imbalances created by the colonialist regime. The struggle for emancipation from the former colonial masters by the colonised was highly inconceivable to those benefiting from the oppressive and unequal system which tended to side with the minority system against the majority and original inhabitants of the conquered lands. An analysis of the aspect of colonialism reveals a translucent fact that those who colonized were never subjected to scrutiny for all the evil deeds they committed against a people who offered them hospitality.

The attainment of independence for all the colonized people from the colonialists was highly unfavorable to the latter and a new form of colonization was and is still being crafted to perpetuate a system that makes it impossible for the former to be self-sustaining. It is in the best interest of this analysis to demonstrate that the Gold Mafia Documentary is an attempt by the former colonial masters and their cronies to maintain a

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<sup>11</sup> Groupson-Paul U C Okechukwu, "Oil Politics And War In Libya: Arming Of Rebels And The New Phase Of Neo Democracy Evaluated," *Escet Journal Of Educational Research And Policy Studies* 1, No. 1 (2021): 248–78.

<sup>12</sup> Jeffrey A Frieden, "The Modern Capitalist World Economy: A Historical Overview," in *The Oxford Handbook of Capitalism* (Oxford University Press Oxford, 2012), 18.

<sup>13</sup> Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1966).

<sup>14</sup> Hussein A Bulhan, "Stages of Colonialism in Africa: From Occupation of Land to Occupation of Being," *Journal of Social and Political Psychology* 3, no. 1 (2015).

<sup>15</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (duke university Press, 2020), 23.

<sup>16</sup> Andrew Walter and Gautam Sen, *Analyzing the Global Political Economy* (Princeton University Press, 2008), 189.

<sup>17</sup> Stieglitz, "The Future of Global Governance," 2 ; David M Rowe, "World Economic Expansion and National Security in Pre-World War I Europe," *International Organization* 53, no. 2 (1999): 195–231; Joanne Gowa, *Allies, Adversaries, and International Trade* (Princeton University Press, 1995); Joseph M Grieco, *Cooperation among Nations: Europe, America, and Non-Tariff Barriers to Trade* (Cornell University Press, 1990); R Gilpin, "War and Change in International Politics, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press," 1981.

foothold and continue benefiting from the mineral-rich Zimbabwe thereby shutting out other potential and friendly nations. After having failed to secure a foothold in Zimbabwe through opposition politics the Western detractors are brewing nonexistent issues to cause discontent. In these machinations, Al Jazeera became an ideological tool for delegitimizing a liberating model of gold trade led by a global subaltern state.

The Gold Mafia by Al Jazeera is an expedient move to downplay the new economic order that the Zimbabwean government adopted after having been slapped with unjustified trade embargoes labelled as sanctions against government officials perceived to be violating human rights by the West which used to be the main trading partners in Zimbabwe. The trade embargoes declared against Zimbabwe in 2002 were propounded and passed in the American Congress in 2001 after the Zimbabwean government implemented the Land Reform Program to readdress the unjust colonial system which left the majority of people settling in arid and semi-arid areas. Apart from being a new trade order on strategic resources, it is also a new model for remittances of proceeds from that trade, away from the capitalist fashioned global banking system which has been mobilized to enforce sanctions against Zimbabwe.

Since the West specifically Britain, the United States of America and the EU in general were the main trading partners, Zimbabwe was left with no option but to search for new friendly nations to associate with in corporate affairs. Zimbabwe had to adopt the Look Far East Policy in retaliation to the wanton policy aggression of the West and the EU. The Look Far East Policy was put into effect during the tenure of the First Republic president the late Robert Gabriel Mugabe. The West and the EU were and are still by nature the real Mafia who have attempted to transpose the term 'Mafia' in a 'kill the victim, save the villain' fashion. This is what Wolfsfeld, Sheafer and Elthaus refer to as transposing knowledge or falsification in political communication.<sup>18</sup> They declare the prices of minerals from third-world countries and the end products they manufacture. There is no consensus in trade affairs, everything is being declared for the less economically developed countries who own the resources they siphoned from the colonial era to the present day.

The Zimbabwean government adopted an alternative strategy to trade with countries such as China, the United Arab Emirates and Dubai. The economic sanctions imposed against Zimbabwe barred the country from exporting their trade items such as gold and tobacco. The Look East Policy resulted in countries such as China invading the economic space that used to be occupied by the United States of America and countries within the European Union. There is nothing sinister about the Gold trade occurring between Zimbabwe and countries like China, the UAE and Dubai.

The gold mafia documentary is therefore an attempt to demonize the smooth trade in gold between Zimbabwe and the countries from the East. The new trade model being pursued by Zimbabwe irked the Western countries and it is without doubt that the documentary was targeted to tarnish the image of the president of Zimbabwe ahead of the general elections and make the ZANU PF party lose to the opposition CCC, which is aligned to the West. The documentary actually enlisted the ideological participation of opposition party ideologues like Tendai Biti and Simba Chikanza in the development and discourse. A look at the economic progress of the second republic especially in the mining sector contradicts the unsubstantiated drama of the Gold Mafia documentary.

There is an increase in gold production especially from small-scale miners or artisanal miners who then sell the gold to Fidelity Printers. It suffices to indicate that the rise of artisanal miners signifies a shift from the monopolization of gold trade by MNCs who have for years thrived on the exploitation of African gold reserves. The smooth trade in gold between Zimbabwe and the Eastern allies forestalled the intended objectives of the economic sanctions which were meant to cripple the Zimbabwean economy and cause social unrest and discontent ultimately leading to regime change. The West wants to maintain an economic monopoly and hegemony and exclude other economic players friendly to Zimbabwe.

It is crystal clear that the documentary attempts to scandalize Zimbabwe's alternative economic survival methods by accelerating the Gold trade by other means. In order to overcome the reeling effects of the illegal sanctions imposed by the West, new economic strategies had to be designed. Trade in gold had to be escalated with the new economic partners from the East. New and lucrative markets have emerged in China, UAE and Dubai, which offer attractive prices than the West. This is an illustration of the shift in global power away from the hegemonic West. Hence, Zimbabwe as a sovereign state decides with whom to trade and align. Having realized that the Zimbabwean government was defeating the imposed illegal economic sanctions in the manner in which the Ian Smith regime did against the sanctions imposed by Britain, the West had to carefully plot a play to soil the Zimbabwean government. What the documentary tried to portray as illegal gold mining and trafficking should be seen as a militant strategy to overcome the burden of illegal trade embargoes against a

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<sup>18</sup> Gadi Wolfsfeld, Tamir Sheafer, and Scott L Althaus, *Building Theory in Political Communication: The Politics-Media-Politics Approach* (Oxford University Press, 2022).

sovereign nation. The West believes that it reserves the sole right to dictate or declare prices and how trade is supposed to be conducted at the global level.

What they term international trade standards are by nature universalisation of their own expectations which had reigned since colonial times such that they get products especially minerals at lower prices. Walter Rodney in his book *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* highlighted it.<sup>19</sup> The development of Europe led to the underdevelopment of Africa as Rodney noted.<sup>20</sup> Unchecked siphoning of resources from Africa to Europe led to the loss of uncountable billions of dollars which could have been used to develop Africa. The enormous losses of resources created by the unjust colonial system never received any condemnation from Europe. Now that Zimbabwe has redirected its trade strategies towards countries offering fair practices from the West with its trade malpractices, they have seen it fit to condemn the friendly trade system that has replaced their own. The documentary is nothing but a fictitious story aimed at discrediting the gains being made by the second republic against the background of prolonged trade restrictions placed against Zimbabwe.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Harmonization of global gold trade:** The harmonization of global gold trade will go a long way in plugging gold trafficking in the world. The WTO ought to scrap the existing unfair trade rules and policies towards harmonizing global gold trade.

**Reformation of the global trade regimes:** The key to having trade regimes reformed includes urgent reforms on international trade regimes which include reforming global trade institutions, global trade rules and international pricing systems. The exploitative nature of existing systems is making it hard for Africa including Zimbabwe to engage in profitable gold trade.

**Respect for sovereignty:** The principles underpinning state sovereignty include how Zimbabwe's gold is traded, where the gold is traded and when its trade should be respected. Interference in the political and economic (trade) affairs of other countries must be criminalized under international law.

**Remove sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe:** The removal of economic sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe is long overdue. These economic embargoes are militating against Zimbabwe's participation in global trade resulting in gold mining and gold buying entities in Zimbabwe improvising on where and how their gold is traded.

**Accelerating efforts to attain a decolonial order in Africa:** A Decolonial World Order denotes a world free from capitalist machinations and domination such as what culminated in Africa, Asia and Latin America unfairly treated and subordinated economically, politically, militarily, socially and culturally by Western states. Efforts to deal with the colonial world order took center stage from the 1950s and culminated in the movements and wars of resistance to colonialism in the three continents and the subsequent attainment of artificial independence largely in the political realms. Agreements and accords were concluded to formalise the political independence of the formerly colonised societies. While agreements such as the 1979 Lancaster House Agreement concluded in the wake of the recognition of political independence in Zimbabwe, the decolonisation process remained unfinished business because there was no closure to the land question, resource exploitation and aspects of other socio-economic imbalances.

## CONCLUSION

In the final analysis, it can be argued that the documentary was plain propaganda aimed at countering Zimbabwe's soft power survival strategies. It is crystal clear that it was a well-orchestrated political gimmick utilized to portray the new dispensation in Zimbabwe as a thoughtless and self-centered and egotistical mafia cartel milking the country's resources for the benefit of those in the upper echelons of power at the expense of the majority. A closer look at the documentary reveals that it is also a disguised political campaign to make the electorate believe that they are mere pawns being manipulated by the present political system to achieve their own goals and exclude them from materially benefiting from the country's vast resource base. Clearly, the intention of the documentary embodies an ulterior political motive which was meant to discredit the new dispensation in the run-up to the 2023 general elections held in August 2023. In this regard, it was an attempt to shame the ZANU PF regime and scare away the electorate from voting in its favor and redirect it to the opposition, particularly the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC). As part of the regime change schema, the documentary was therefore a soft power counterstrategy by the West and their political equivalents to topple the ZANU PF from power using geriatrics to depict imagined maladministration and malpractices.

Unsurprisingly, it has always been the West's political apparatus to cook lies and disseminate them through propaganda houses in the pursuit of their neo-imperialist interests. While economic sanctions have

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<sup>19</sup> Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa?* (London: Verso Books, 1972).

<sup>20</sup> Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa?* .

dismally failed to effect the regime change agenda, emphasis is placed upon twisting the mind of the electorate from backing the new dispensation in this forthcoming general election. It has been programmed and spread much to the chagrin of the ZANU PF leadership. Hence since elections are nearing, saboteurs have committed themselves to causing a situation of despondency among the Zimbabwean electorate, gaining ground on baseless falsehoods staged in the Hollywood movie manner.

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